

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FISCAL YEAR 1999 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is to provide citizens with the most efficient, safe transportation system and manage it in a way that fosters economic development and improves the quality of life in the state.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The department has developed the following objectives for fulfilling its mission:

HIGHWAYS — Provide cost-effective, quality highways and services;

AIRPORTS — Improve Illinois' airport system and preserve the nation's premier hub in Northeastern Illinois by developing a third major airport;

TRANSIT — Ensure the availability of public transportation through a stable base of operating and capital funding so that transit can continue to provide a mobility option for individuals, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality;

RAIL — Preserve inter-city rail passenger service and develop a high-speed rail system;

PLANNING — Integrate environmental and quality of life concerns in the transportation planning process; and

INNOVATIONS — Apply innovative technological solutions that improve the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system, reduce congestion and enhance highway construction materials and designs.

SUMMARY OF FY 1999 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IMPROVED 1,255 miles of highway and 443 bridges on the state and local systems;

ADVANCED high-speed rail development, including the installation and testing of Vehicle Arresting Barriers at three rail crossings;

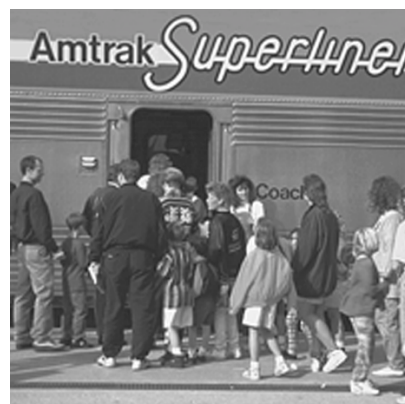
MAINTAINED gains in ridership on intercity passenger trains;

REHABILITATED rapid transit cars in Chicago and opened multi-modal facility downtown;

SUPPORTED improvements at nine commercial service airports and 37 other airports serving general aviation statewide;

AIDED traffic safety efforts, maintaining the lowest fatality rate in the state's history; and

SUPPORTED non-motorized transportation by opening more than 100 miles of bicycle trails and starting another 50 miles of bikeways.



The Illinois Department of Transportation serves the transportation needs of the citizens of Illinois through its divisions of Aeronautics, Highways, Public Transportation and Traffic Safety.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a state agency responsible for all modes of transportation, the Illinois Department of Transportation :

DESIGNS, coordinates, constructs, maintains and operates the state system of highways and bridges;

PLANS, coordinates and administers funding and technical assistance for public transit systems, airports and rail freight and passenger systems; and

ADMINISTERS traffic safety programs.



Rehabilitation of Illinois' interstate highway system is a department priority.

Customer Service —Past and Present

In fulfilling its responsibilities for building and maintaining the statewide transportation system and enhancing traffic safety, IDOT continually looks ahead to provide more efficient programs and services for Illinois citizens through use of new technological tools. The department also encourages the public to participate in all aspects of transportation decision-making.

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

Among the innovative technological tools that originated in the 1990s - and continue to be used - to improve productivity, quality and service for the benefit of Illinois highway users include:

Computerized highway and bridge designs—IDOT uses a Computer-Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) system that improves efficiency by standardizing computerized drawings and contract plans for highways and bridges and allowing quick, error-free exchange of information through file transfers with consulting firms.

Automated pavement checks— To assess highway needs, the department uses a Video Inspection Vehicle, a high-tech van with high-resolution video cameras and measuring devices, to check the condition of roads. The survey provides more refined and accurate data and exposes fewer employees to traffic hazards by eliminating the need to leave their vehicles for closer inspection of roads.

State-of-the-art electronic information systems— IDOT continues to develop and test intelligent transportation systems (ITS) that improve safety and efficiency in various transportation technologies, such as those used in relieving congestion in major urban areas. The projects often involve operational and funding cooperation with federal and state agencies and other groups. Some of the most recent or ongoing initiatives include the following:

Gary-Chicago-Milwaukee (GCM) ITS Priority Corridor Program— Among various projects begun by the GCM program is one that provides real-time travel information for the three-state expressway corridor. The GCM projects provide valuable information on how to coordinate intelligent transportation systems under separate jurisdictions into an integrated regional system. Last year, the GCM program won the ITS America Award for Outstanding Achievement in Regional and Corridor Programs. In addition, Chicago has been chosen as the site for the 2002 ITS World Congress.

Toll road vehicle identification technology— IDOT is studying vehicle travel times on the toll road by continuing to test Automatic Vehicle Identification (AVI) technology in conjunction with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority's (ISTHA) electronic toll collection system. This electronic information is being used in detecting toll road travel delays under an updated ISTHA traffic management system.

Road weather monitoring system– Today, there are 51 Roadway Weather Information Systems (RWIS) that use measuring devices, such as pavement sensors and radar, to continually monitor weather-related road conditions. District offices in the northern two-thirds of the state are directly linked with the measuring devices and use that information, along with weather forecasts, to determine how to dispatch winter maintenance crews. RWIS helps improve traffic safety and conserve resources.

Train detection devices– A pilot project called Train Detection Technology will test special devices installed in 300 vehicles that warn of oncoming trains at five grade crossings in the northern Chicago suburbs.

“Smart” weigh stations– To help improve commercial vehicle travel times and reduce congestion at weigh stations, IDOT is testing an advanced weigh-in-motion scale at the Williamsville station along I-55. The technology allows commercial vehicles to be weighed while traveling at normal speed on the highway and clears those immediately within legal limits. Commercial vehicles that are not cleared will have to either stop at the weigh station or be checked by a low-speed weigh-in-motion system.

Railroad grade crossing barriers– The department is testing Vehicle Arresting Barriers (VABs) at three grade crossings in the proposed high-speed rail corridor between Chicago and St. Louis. Illinois is the first state to test this technology at grade crossings. A VAB, which costs about \$1 million, consists of two towers with nets on each side of the tracks. When a train approaches the crossing, the nets are automatically lowered from the towers to block or “catch” any vehicle attempting to cross the tracks. VABs have been used to snag vehicles on moveable bridges, ferry slips and at the entrance to the reversible express lanes on the Kennedy Expressway in Chicago.

Tracking trains– The Positive Train Control Project, a joint pilot program with the Federal Railroad Administration and the Association of American Railroads, will link locomotives equipped with computers to the Union Pacific train control center in Omaha, Neb., through satellite technology. The project on a 123-mile section of track between Springfield and near Dwight is expected to demonstrate that such monitoring can improve operations and safety, especially for freight and passenger trains traveling at different speeds over shared track.

SERVING THE PUBLIC

During the 1990s, IDOT has significantly expanded services for the public and encouraged citizens to participate in various aspects of transportation decision-making. The department added a toll-free phone number; established an Internet Web site, and held a series of statewide open houses, forums and meetings in conjunction with the development of the Illinois State Transportation Plan. Public comments were included in the final long-range plan, which identifies strategies for implementing 21st century policies and goals.

Activities that directly benefit travelers and commuters include:

Interstate rest areas– Five new rest areas were added during the 1990s along interstate highways, bringing the statewide total to 30. The quality of service at most rest areas has been improved by contracting with sheltered workshops, which employed 300 persons in FY 1999 to maintain the sites. In addition, computerized weather information stations at four welcome center rest areas near the borders of neighboring states assist travelers with reports of weather conditions on their routes.

Highway safety features– Textured shoulder pavements, called “rumble strips,” that alert motorists who begin to veer off a road have been added to 1,500 miles of Illinois interstate highways since being implemented in 1991. IDOT also increased the use of raised lane markers to alert motorists who cross a driving lane, installing more than 3 million raised markers during the last decade. Added in front of concrete piers along highways to help prevent injuries or fatalities, sand-filled barrels are now in place at 150 locations statewide.



Department emergency traffic patrols provide motorist assistance on expressways in the Chicago and East St. Louis metropolitan areas.

Emergency traffic patrols—Sixty patrols of “Minutemen” respond to more than 100,000 incidents yearly involving stalled motorists or crashes on Chicago area expressways. The Chicago program was awarded the national Public Service Excellence Award in 1995. IDOT also operates a smaller patrol program on interstate highways in the East St. Louis area, with 16 crew members in 16 vehicles responding to more than 14,000 calls a year.

Adopt-a-Highway—Through this community involvement effort, more than 1,000 local groups have helped to keep Illinois’ roadsides clean by adopting 2,000 miles of state highways. IDOT provides safety training for the volunteers, highway signs, warning vests for them to wear while cleaning up roadside trash, and pickup of the garbage bags. In FY 1999, more than 22,000 bags of litter were picked up statewide.



More than 11,000 Illinoisans participate in the department's Adopt-a-Highway program.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

A well-maintained, safe and efficient transportation system is fundamental to economic development and growth. Transportation is essential for the distribution of products and services to local, regional, state, national and international markets. It is equally essential for getting people to work and to the other places where they participate in the economy, such as retail stores, health services, schools and recreational activities.

Illinois is a major transportation hub in the nation. Its highway, air and rail transportation systems and waterways have always played a critical role in the state's economy by providing access to regional, national and international markets.

The extensive system reflects the dominant presence of transportation in Illinois where one of every five jobs is related to transportation, including construction jobs that are directly created by public investment in transportation. Capital improvements for highways, airports, public transportation, and rail funded during the 1990s created more than 300,000 jobs in the private sector construction industry. In FY 1999, more than 30,000 private sector jobs in construction and related businesses were created.

Department investment policies continue to focus on supporting business and employment growth, preserving and managing the existing system, reducing congestion, improving safety and the efficiency of operations, supporting technology advances, and providing an overall transportation system that offers a high degree of mobility and reliable options.